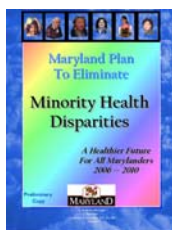
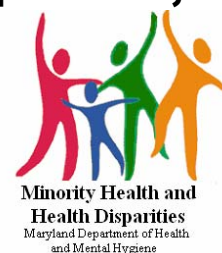


# FACT SHEET

## Maryland Plan to Eliminate Minority Health Disparities, *preliminary copy*



Minority Health and Health Disparities  
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



### OVERVIEW

The first *Maryland Plan to Eliminate Minority Health Disparities* was released in December of 2006. The development of the Plan, two years in the making, was a coordinated effort of the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (MHHD), the public, health professionals, academia, community health groups, other stakeholders and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). The Plan offers a discussion, with accompanying data, on health disparities in Maryland as well as the nation. The most important feature of the Plan is the compilation of public comment from over 1,200 citizens. Next steps for the Plan involve promoting active change throughout the state within the public and private sectors.

### PURPOSE

The development of the Plan is intended to:

- Provide information to assist Maryland's communities in planning and implementing ways to eliminate minority health disparities
- Promote a dialogue across Maryland on the causes, solutions and challenges faced by the state pertaining to minority health disparities

### METHODS

The methodological approach of the Plan was to:

- Examine a broad array of research literature, reports and data about disparities, workforce diversity, and cultural competency
- Solicit input from a variety of sources

Outreach activities to solicit input for the Plan included:

- Expert health disparities planning committees (4)
- Town hall meetings (6)
- Racial/ethnic focused health roundtables (5)
- Annual health disparities conferences (3)
- The Maryland Health Disparities Website
- Minority Outreach and Technical Assistance (MOTA) Grantees

### CONTENT

The Plan provides the following information on health disparities:

- The overview outlines concepts needed to understand health disparities. It presents national data and information on causes of health disparities, the impact of disparities, selected disparities in disease morbidity and mortality, unequal access to healthcare, quality of care and the under-representation of minorities in the health professions
- The next section outlines Maryland data and information on selected health disparities in mortality, disease occurrence, disease risk factors, health insurance and access to quality healthcare
- The next section outlines challenges and solutions to eliminating minority health disparities in Maryland, including a summary of many ideas recommended by citizens throughout the state's jurisdictions
- The final section outlines next steps needed for Maryland to move from the Plan to an Action Agenda

## **EMERGING ISSUES IN ADDRESSING MARYLAND HEALTH DISPARITIES**

The key strategies that emerged from the public discussions and dialogues are:

- Capitalize on the wealth of resources that currently exist in the state
  - Promote coordination, partnerships and communication with public, private, academic, grassroots & community groups
  - Develop a state-wide advisory group for all entities working on health disparities
  - Empower grassroots organizations and community groups
- Ensure access to care by providing quality care in a timely fashion and in a culturally and linguistically meaningful way
  - Foster collaborations with state and key stakeholders
  - Remove barriers healthcare
  - Develop and use evidence-based guidelines
  - Apply culturally consistent patient-centered interventions
- Diversify the health workforce community and increase cultural competence of all healthcare providers
  - Enhance preparation of students in mathematics and sciences
  - Increase number of minority students in mathematics and sciences
  - Facilitate the training and preparation of foreign-trained health workers
  - Provide cultural competency training to healthcare professionals
- Ensure that complete and accurate racial and ethnic information becomes part of all health and healthcare data systems
  - Analyze reports on health status and healthcare quality by race and ethnicity
  - Collect data on racial and ethnic minority groups and sub-groups
  - Standardize Maryland's health data systems methods
- Identify funding strategies to support extensive resources needed
  - Fund pilot projects
  - Fund demonstration projects within DHMH
  - Fund the state's public education system
  - Foster collaborations between centers for health disparities
  - Provide resources for MHHD to develop effective infrastructure

## **FUTURE PLANS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

In calendar year 2007, MHHD will take steps to promote active change throughout Maryland's healthcare system. To do this, MHHD will:

- Convene work sessions with health professional academic institutions to review existing standards that promote cultural competency and collaborate in advancing practical applications and sharing best practices to address minority health disparities
- Take strategic action steps that target the reduction of specific health disparities among affected groups in Maryland
- Develop partnerships among public and private sector agencies and advocacy groups to implement recommendations for change

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT**

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For more information or to obtain a copy of the Plan, please visit [www.mdhealthdisparities.org](http://www.mdhealthdisparities.org)

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